

756 catch. To most Indians the okuli is the greatest man on earth; they do not dare say anything against him, for he knows everything that goes on, no matter how far away he is.

794 THE SPIRITIST.—A new movement, not unlike the nyalism among  
786 Jamaican Negroes, has appeared among the Christianized Miskito during the last 40 years. While engaged in fervent prayers, either in church or at home, certain people suddenly begin to act like mad; they shiver over the whole body, run and dance around, give out loud screams, and by other means seek to attract attention.

[755] They claim that at such periods they have no control over their actions, and that the latter are due to the presence of the Holy Ghost in themselves. For this reason they are known among the Miskito as *pirit-uplita* "spirit men." While in this state of ecstasy they are supposed to be able to cure the sick by laying hands upon them. They also pretend having revelations from God during their dreams.

Although excluded from church membership by the Moravians, the spirit men or spirit women, for the female sex is not excluded from this office, frequent the churches. They pretend to be good Christians, and their influence is very great among the Christianized Miskito. The movement has, however, not had many followers among the Sumu. In certain districts the spiritists cause more trouble to the work of evangelization than to their heathen confrères, the *sukyá*. Although attributing the results of their cures directly and solely to the will of God, some of these spiritists make use of native herbs, of which they have a crude knowledge.

754 OBEAH OR VODOOISM.—The belief in obeah (*obia*) was brought over from Africa by the slaves, and it still exists among the ignorant Creoles and the immigrated West Indian Negroes. The Blacks from British Honduras are especially noted as great obeah or voodoo men.

Feathers, bones, colored rags, thunderbolts (stone axes), and small bottles filled with insects and powdered earth, belong to the paraphernalia of these shamans, whose mode of working their spells does not differ essentially from that of the Indian *sukyá*. Some of the obeah men from Jamaica or British Honduras have become *sukyá* upon settling among the Indians of the Mosquito Coast.

The obeah men are much feared by the Creoles, Negroes, and Indians, as they are supposed to inflict bad luck, disease, and death upon an enemy. When some one is suffering from a lingering malady it is said that obeah is "on" him. His only recourse is to go to an obeah man, who will remove the evil for the payment of a sum of money. This sort of sorcery is, indeed, a very profitable business. Should the sick person die, however, the obeah man will claim that his instructions have not been carried out.